Off Campus Provision of London Metropolitan University

THE LONDON FILM SCHOOL

MA SCREENWRITING

Course Handbook
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1. **Welcome to the MA Screenwriting**

This is the Course Handbook for the MA Screenwriting. All the staff in the Screenwriting Department at The London Film School, and the staff in the Department of Humanities, Arts, Languages and Education (HALE) at London Metropolitan University, warmly welcome you to The London Film School for an intensive year of study, discussion and practice.

There is a considerable amount of information contained in this Handbook, some of which will be of greater relevance to you as you work through the course than it is at the start of your course of studies at The London Film School.

We recommend that you read this Course Handbook through carefully **now** in order to save yourself time. Keep it safely: you will need to use it through your course. The answers to most of the questions you will want to ask about your Course are in here.

You should note that, occasionally, in order to improve the Course, the details in this Handbook may be amended or revised.

**The London Film School**

The London Film School has run an acclaimed practical filmmaking course for over 50 years. An international community of students produce over 60 films every twelve weeks on both 16mm and 35mm. In short, LFS operates as a mini-studio with departments of cinematography, editing, sound and production design creating a constant through-flow of production, debate and project development. The practical filmmaking course is accredited by London Metropolitan University as a two-year Masters programme.

Successful graduates work at all levels in the international film industry. They include the directors Mike Leigh and Michael Mann, as well as several outstanding cinematographers such as Tak Fujimoto and Roger Pratt. The school thus has a long established relationship with the feature film industry through the support of professional writers, directors, cinematographers, editors and producers.

As an intellectual complement to the practical work, the filmmaking course includes a series of lectures on film style, history and analysis that take place in one of two cinemas with 35mm projection. MA Screenwriters attend all these classes along with the MA Filmmakers.

For further information go to our website at [www.lfs.org.uk](http://www.lfs.org.uk)

**MA in Screenwriting**

The establishment of a specialist MA in Screenwriting is a part of the continuing academic and professional development at LFS. The screenwriting course is unique in the UK, offering writers the opportunity to work within a filmmaking community in collaboration with directors and other writers. The course is aimed at those who are excited by filmmaking and cinema – who are keen to understand what is distinctive about the screenwriter’s role in that process – and equally keen to work professionally within the film and television industries, either in the UK or their country of origin.

The screenwriting course fills a full calendar year and is aimed at writers committed to working intensively and at speed on projects that are full-time rather than part-time endeavours.
Course Philosophy

- To encourage writing as a state of mind and everyday practice
- To stimulate a reflective and critical approach to practice
- To provide an historical background to filmmaking
- To place the screenplay in the context of a collaborative filmmaking process
- To explore the boundaries between writing, directing and producing
- To stimulate alternative approaches to screenwriting through awareness of different dramaturgical traditions
- To take on writers who are capable of developing a mentoring relationship with a working professional
- To focus on the development of each writer's individual voice and vision, in tandem with the development of key skills necessary to the craft of writing for cinema
- To create a context in which the writer works with others involved in the filmmaking community – directors, actors, musicians, designers, producers – not only as a writer but potentially in other roles in the development and production process

Course Structure

The programme is non-modular. It is composed of three units to be taken sequentially. The course is full-time only and lasts one year. Some of the component classes are term specific and others run continuously throughout the whole programme.

Teaching

Lectures, seminars and workshops will be taught by in-house tutors and visiting professionals.

The key elements to be adopted by the MA Screenwriting course team are based on the following:

- An emphasis on student-centred learning, which enables writers to develop transferable skills, knowledge and competence through active participation in the teaching and learning processes of each unit
- An expectation that students will take a high level of responsibility for their own learning and development
- An emphasis on the practice of writing in a collaborative and professional context
- The integration of specialist areas of screenwriting alongside regular contact with industry professionals

Using these guidelines, a range of teaching and learning methods will be employed by the programme team:

- lectures with hand-outs and other aids, including video/DVD, to provide a systematic introduction to key issues
- lectures and practice-based seminars by visiting practitioners
- screenings of classic and contemporary short and feature films followed by analysis and discussion to deepen the understanding of film history and context. Many of these take place with students from the MA Filmmaking, thus creating an opportunity for communication between the course, as well as potential collaboration.
- a series of writing workshops with regular practical exercises complementing the assessed projects
- student-led seminar discussions on topics raised in lectures where students can develop creative and critical skills
- case-studies to develop student understanding of professional practice, filmmaking traditions, and their own skills in analysis and communication
- filmmaking exercises involving professionals and students from other filmmaking disciplines to enhance the writers’ practical understanding of how others involved in making movies work with the screenwriter’s text
- individual tutorial sessions to provide specialised guidance and feedback
- individual mentoring by practicing professionals to support the development of the major writing project, a feature film screenplay (term three only)

**Work and research journal**

Students are required to keep a work and research journal, which will be used to record their critical reflections on the theoretical and practical elements of the course, as well as critical and creative responses to related experiences and reflections on their own work-in-progress.

The Work and Research Journal should be developed and written in the context of the course objectives and the individual writer’s aims and ambitions. At the beginning of the year and for each subsequent term, students are expected to write down their aims and also describe how they will assess their personal development in relation to these aims. At the end of the unit, they are expected to comment in writing on their success and shortfalls as measured by their own assessment. This offers students the opportunity to present their goals for the unit, formulate their own criteria for self-assessment and reflect on their progress as measured by these criteria.

The Work and Research Journal should be considered both as a valuable future resource for the writer as well as a means of monitoring and assessing the work towards the MA in Screenwriting. The approach should be balanced and rigorous, encompassing the writer’s creative and critical, artistic and analytical, intellectual and imaginative encounters with his/her own work and other’s at LFS and beyond.

**Mentoring**

Monitoring of a student’s progress and mentoring throughout the course will come first and foremost from the course leader in consultation with course tutors. Each student will also be assigned a personal tutor, who will schedule one-to-one consultations, at the beginning and end of each term to discuss progress on the Work & Research Journal, the short film and the feature project. Meetings with Personal Tutors are also an opportunity to discuss related issues and development in relationship to individual aims.

In the third term, each writer will be given the opportunity to meet three times with a mentor to discuss their feature project and future career plans. Mentors will be chosen by the course leader in consultation with the development tutors, who have been working with the writers in Term 2. A key element of mentoring is the matching of the feature project and the student writer’s background with a practising professional, most likely a writer or development executive, though possibly a director or producer.

**Screenings**

A sense of the history of their chosen art and craft and an awareness of the international and national context of contemporary film is a necessary basis for the critical and informed use of the screenwriting skills students will be honing in workshops and through targeted writing exercises. Viewing and discussing as many significant films as possible is vital to the development of a critical vocabulary sufficient to enable collaborations centred on the development of their own work.
Whenever possible the School insists on showing films in 35mm and in ratio of the original presentation so students can get an exact sense of colour and composition. Screenings are preceded by contextual introductions and are followed by lecture and discussion.

**Collaboration with MA Filmmaking Students**

Students on the MA Screenwriting course will attend classes in film history and analysis with students on the MA Filmmaking course. At these times and others – both scheduled and impromptu – screenwriting students will have opportunities to develop the creative relationships that lead to productive collaboration. The collaboration can range from exchanging ideas to developing scripts and working on student films.

It is expected that many of these relationships will develop outside the curriculum and beyond the completion of the course. It should be made clear, however, that while these opportunities exist there is no guarantee that scripts written by MA Screenwriting students will be produced by students on the MA Filmmaking course. It is just as valuable for writers to be part of the development of other people’s scripts as to see their own stories on the screen.

**Reading List: Screenwriting Theory & Practice**

**Classic Texts:**


**Screenwriting Theory**

**Feature Film Screenwriting**

**Major Texts:**

Alexander Mackendrick and Paul Cronin(ed), *On Filmmaking* Faber and Faber, 2005
David Howard and Edward Mabley, *The Tools of Screenwriting* (St.Martin's Griffin, 1993)
Cherry Potter, *Screen Language* (Methuen, 2001)
Alexander Steele (ed)
Syd Field, *Screenplay* (Delta, 2005)
Robert McKee, *Story* (Methuen, 1999)
Linda Aronson, *Screenwriting Updated* (Silman-James Press, 2001)
Yves Lavandier, *Writing Drama* (La Dramaturgie) (Le Clown and L’enfant,2004)
Blake Snyder, *Save the Cat* (Michael Wiese Productions, 2005)

**Short Film Screenwriting**

Pat Cooper & Ken Dancyger, *Writing the Short Film* (Focal Press, 2004)
Claudia Hunter Johnson, *Crafting Short Screenplays that Connect* (Focal Press, 2005)

**Screenwriting Practice**

Kevin Conroy Scott, *Screenwriters’ Masterclass* (Faber and Faber, 2005)

**Adaptation**


**Format**

Paul Argentini, *Elements of Style for Screenwriters* (Lone Eagle, 1998)

**Location**

The main site for all classes will be the MA Screenwriting at the London Film School
33 Longacre, WC2E 9LA. Tel: 0207 836 9642

Other classes including Film History and all major screenings will take place at the London Film School, 24 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9UB. Tel: 0207 836 9642
2. Study on a London Metropolitan University award

(a) Key Features of Postgraduate Courses

The details of your course curriculum and structure are set out in the Course Specification (see Section 7) and you should study this closely. Many of its features are defined by the Postgraduate Regulatory Framework, section 4 of the University's Academic Regulations: this sets out a number of general features which are common to almost all Masters courses (with a very small number of exceptions).

(i) The standard Masters award has a total credit point value of 180 credits at level M. This represents a total volume of 1800 notional learning hours associated with the award, where 1 credit is equivalent to 10 learning hours. For full-time students starting in the Autumn term, a Masters programme is taught over a 48-week full-time year, approximating to 40 hours a week and indicative of the typical workload of a full-time postgraduate course. On courses offering February entry, full-time entrants starting in the Spring term have a similar workload but distributed over a longer study period of some 16 months, with completion normally at the end of the following Spring semester. For part-time students the overall workload is equivalent, but the learning hours are distributed over a longer period of study, normally at least two years.

(ii) The MA Screenwriting comprises three units with a weighting of 60 credits each. One unit will be taught and assessed each term over a total of three terms.

(iii) On most courses, the taught elements consist mainly of ‘core modules’ which are compulsory for you to study; your course may also include modules which are ‘designate’, which means the module can be chosen from a designated list of modules, or ‘elective’, which means the module can be chosen freely from a University-wide range of modules available at postgraduate level (M). All modules on the MA Screenwriting course are core modules, the programme does not allow students a choice of modules.

(iv) The proportion of credit (one third) associated with the dissertation/project and its contribution to your final award is indicative of its importance within a Masters programme, as evidence of your ‘mastery’ of your chosen subject area at an advanced level.

(v) As preparation for work on the dissertation/project, a core element of your taught programme (normally a separate module) will be concerned with issues of research methodology, project development and practice, and related issues.

(vi) All taught modules and the dissertation/project module are marked on a percentage scale, with a pass/fail threshold of 50%.

Masters degree
A Masters degree shall be awarded to a student who has passed units equivalent to 180 credits at Masters level within their approved programme of study.

Each Unit has a Film component and a Journal component. Unit 1 and Unit 2 Film components are marked Fail/Pass. Unit 3 Film component is marked Fail/Pass/Distinction, with the Distinction carrying through to the Award. Journal components are marked Fail/Pass.

(viii) In addition to the Masters award, all postgraduate courses normally offer the subsidiary awards of Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma. The full list of awards and their requirements in terms of credit points and modules passed at level M is as follows:
The Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma awards offer the opportunity to obtain a postgraduate qualification if you are unable to complete the full programme of study leading to a University Masters award. They are particularly useful for students in certain circumstances, for example when a student finds they have to curtail their postgraduate studies unexpectedly, for personal or employment reasons, or who find that their aims and ambitions change and they wish to take a different direction.

For most students, of course, your goal will be to achieve the full Masters qualification. The Screenwriting Department wishes you every success in achieving this ambition and hopes that you have an intellectually stimulating and personally rewarding time as a postgraduate student at The London Film School.

3. London Metropolitan University and its links with The London Film School.

Introduction

Students on courses that have been validated by, or are franchises of, London Metropolitan University, are registered with the University and will receive an award of the University. The University accepts responsibility for the quality assurance of these courses and employs a number of mechanisms to ensure quality, namely: course validation and review; the employment of an external examiner; annual course monitoring; assessment boards and most importantly, good communication between the two institutions.

The University and your institution sign a Memorandum of Agreement (a type of contract) whereby each agrees the remit of the collaboration and in so doing, the University devolves responsibility for the delivery of the course to The London Film School.

(a) The course

This course is validated by London Metropolitan University. This means that by successfully completing all parts of the course you will receive a London Metropolitan award and may, if you wish, attend the University’s Awards Ceremony, normally held at the Barbican in London in December.

If you do not complete the course, you will be awarded credit for the parts of the course you have passed. If you have accumulated enough credit you may be entitled to an alternative award. For further information please refer to the London Metropolitan University Academic Regulations at: http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/academic-regulations/.

(b) The University’s Academic Regulations

The University’s Academic Regulations are available to students on the website shown above.
It is also particularly important that you familiarise yourself with the Postgraduate Regulatory Framework (Section 4 of the Academic Regulations) and the Procedures for the submission of Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards (Section 10.4).

The Academic Regulations governing your course have been determined by your College/Institution and will have been considered by the University as part of its validation of your course. However, the expectation is that they will not differ from the University’s regulations to the extent that it will be easier or harder for you to complete your award than it is for University-based students. Where regulations differ, it is because they have been adapted to suit the subject discipline or the organisation in which the teaching and assessment takes place.

4. **Studying at Postgraduate Level**

Your success on your course depends upon full and regular attendance at all classes – seminars, lectures, workshops, tutorials etc. You should inform your Course Leader as soon as possible if you have problems with attendance. The University recognises the importance of attendance and its correlation in assisting students to achieve their learning potential. Experience has shown that students who do not attend all their classes have a very high risk of failure.

(a) **Studying**

Your course will provide you with constant opportunities to learn new skills and acquire knowledge in your chosen subject areas.

You must attend all your timetabled classes that normally include a lecture and a session in a smaller group for each module. You also need to study in your own time and you should plan to spend ten hours a week on each module, making a forty-hour week commitment for a full-time student. You need to allocate this time in your diary.

Prepare for lectures and tutorials by doing any reading or exercises in advance. Always make some notes – there is usually a handout provided. Review these after the class and ask your tutor if there is anything you do not understand.

Note assignment deadlines and exam dates in your diary and remember to begin assignments early. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself and comply with all of the relevant assessment deadlines. You will enjoy researching and planning your work if you allow yourself plenty of time. Make sure you understand what you need to do and plan how you are going to tackle it. Seek advice from the module leader if there is anything that needs clarification.

In summary:

- plan your learning strategy
- allocate enough time
- attend all of your module lectures, tutorials and other sessions
- start assignments well in advance
- be aware of and comply with all assessment deadlines
- seek advice and help
- use the learning resources offered
- enjoy the learning experience!
(b) Mobile phones

Mobile phones are disruptive. Please switch off your mobile phone before entering all classes.

(c) Enrolment and re-enrolment

By now you will have enrolled with the University, your qualifications will have been checked and you have proved who you are. The year’s tuition fees have been established and you have agreed how, and who, is paying those fees. By signing the enrolment form you confirmed that you accept and will follow the University’s regulations.

At enrolment you receive your University ID card and other useful documentation. Each card is set with an expiry date when you enrol, usually the beginning of the next academic year. If you have not been able to fulfil all the requirements then an earlier expiry date is set. You will always be told what you need to do to complete your enrolment.

If you are progressing satisfactorily on your course, re-enrolment takes place at the start of each academic year. It involves you confirming that you are planning to study on your course in the coming academic year and is the point at which tuition fee arrangements for the year are confirmed. Re-enrolment is necessary to ensure that your ID card is reactivated for the new academic year.

(d) Welcome Programme

The Welcome Programme will help you familiarise yourself with The London Film School and your course. You will meet staff from your Department responsible for your course, as well as your fellow students. You will find out when and where teaching takes place and where your main learning centre and IT facilities are located. The Welcome Programme will also include social events – plan to attend these as you will meet students and staff in a more relaxed atmosphere and you can join clubs and societies for sport and other leisure activities. During the Welcome Programme you should check that you have received the following:

- the University Student Handbook
- an ID card
- an email address
- a programme of studies
- a personal timetable
- the location of your Department Office
- the name of your Personal Tutor

(e) Your first term

After your welcome, you will find yourself in the first week of formal teaching, where you will meet your course leader, who will hand out the course timetable, give you an overview of the term and take you through the handbook. You need to plan your time carefully. Attend all your classes as shown on your personal timetable and schedule the extra study time you will need outside the classroom. Note the deadlines for all assessments in your diary. During the first semester you will meet your Personal Tutor to discuss your project work and Work and Research Journal.

(f) Credit for previous learning

Mature students (over 21 on entry) often have previous experience or qualifications. If you have any qualification that may exempt you from part of your course, for example from
another college, you may apply for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL). Similarly, if you have undertaken work, paid or voluntary, that has resulted in learning skills or knowledge that is equivalent to modules you will be studying here, you may apply for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). Collectively these are known as APL and it means you do not have to duplicate study you have done previously. It does not necessarily have to be in your chosen subject, but it must be at the same level as your course of studies here.

If you wish to claim for APL please contact your Course Administrator.

(g) Assessment

Undertaking academic study at undergraduate level may be a new and very different way of studying from your previous experience. A crucial aspect of this learning involves assessment. Successful completion of the various coursework assessments and examinations will be crucial to your achievement of your award at the end of your course. There are various types of assessment on the modules you will take as part of your course. Modules will often involve a combination of examination and coursework as part of the assessment. It is important that you understand clearly the various expectations and the deadlines for these forms of assessment.

(h) A two-way contract

As a student you should:

- follow the regulations as you agreed at enrolment
- attend all the classes on your timetable
- adhere to deadlines
- provide documentation when requested
- look at your College email and the College website, regularly
- register your module choices after advice and on time

The College will:

- monitor its standards and procedures to provide a quality service
- ensure that every student is treated with equity and fairness
- provide access to administrative areas at agreed times
- answer queries and provide timely, accurate and clear information

5. Communication

We will do our best to keep you informed of what you need to know at all times. On arrival at the school you will be given an email account. All communication during the course will be made by email so you should check your emails as often as possible.

(a) Contacting staff

Brian Dunnigan (Course Leader): b.dunnigan@lfs.org.uk
Margaret Glover (Senior Lecturer): m.glover@lfs.org.uk
Ellis Freeman: ellis@bellstreet.demon.co.uk
Jonathan Hourigan: jonathan.hourigan@btopenworld.com
Philip Palmer: jp.palmer@btinternet.com
Roger Hyams: rh.baldy@virgin.net
Amanda Schiff: cabinet.curiosity@btinternet.com

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(b) Contacting University staff

As a rule London Film School staff will be able to deal with your enquiries concerning the course and its administration. However, if you have queries about the quality assurance of the course you may contact the University’s Quality Enhancement Unit.

For queries on Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards you should, in the first instance, email the Student Casework Office at: casework@londonmet.ac.uk or visit the Student Casework Office web page at: www.londonmet.ac.uk/admin/sco/sco.cfm.

(c) Course Committee terms of reference and membership

A Course Committee, normally convened each semester, reviews a set of modules and courses and provides quality assurance. The student voice is heard through the Student Academic Representatives. Key staff including module and course leaders attend. There are terms of reference governing course committees and it is a requirement that action taken is reported back to the students.

(d) Feedback from students on modules and courses

Informal feedback from students is welcomed by staff. Any feedback during term time can be sent by email to the course leader or relayed via student representatives at the end of each semester.

(e) Complaints

Similarly any complaints can be made directly to the course leader by email. A meeting can be arranged to discuss any concerns you might have.

(f) Module/Award results and transcripts

At the end of each semester Assessment Boards confirm marks and recommend awards to the University’s Awards Board. These results are then made available to you. Official transcripts are posted to you at your home address on the completion of your course. There is no charge for this end of course transcript.

(g) Special tutors and arrangements for international students, placements, study abroad etc

All classes, workshops and seminars take place at the London Film School and must be attended in person.

6. Sources of, and access to, information and advice

(a) Personal Tutor

Each student will also be assigned a personal tutor, who will schedule one-to-one consultations, at the beginning and end of each term to discuss progress on the Work & Research Journal, the short film and the feature project. Meetings with Personal Tutors are
also an opportunity to discuss related issues and development in relationship to individual aims.

(b) Course Leader

Your course is led by a Course Leader who is responsible for the day to day organisation of the course, including option choice fairs for programme planning. On arrival at the London Film School you will be able to meet your Course Leader. Your Course Leader is responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the course and liaises with other staff and visiting professionals teaching on the course. The Course Leader is your main source of advice on academic matters, for discussion of course content and subject-related queries. The Course Leader can be a source of valuable advice for other matters to do with your life at LFS and are also your first point of call if circumstances arise which make it difficult to pursue your studies. The Course Leader is able to:

- provide you with individual academic advice on a wide range of aspects of your studies and progress towards completion of your Master’s programme.
- explain the implications of assessment results and associated feedback on your academic performance
- advise you on the management of your plans to best complete the course, e.g. requesting mitigating circumstances due to illness and other common problems.
- help you if necessary with obtaining extra learning and academic study skills support, including support with English writing skills.
- provide advice for specific personal circumstances, linking you to Student Services at London Metropolitan University for support in areas such as personal problems, housing, health and finance, citizenship and visa status (for overseas students).

Do not hesitate to contact your Postgraduate Course Leader to ask for advice or to report any difficulty you are having. LFS is committed to assisting your success on the course and will help overcome any obstacle to your progress.

(c) Management of your course

The course is organised and run by the Course Leader and is overseen by the School’s head of Studies.

(d) Institutional and course administration

The Administration of the course is handled by the course leader and the course administrator. The course administrator deals with the day to day running of the course and provides regular scheduling updates by email. All coursework is submitted through the course administrator.

(e) Pastoral support

Whilst studying at the London Film School you will have a personal tutor who will provide pastoral care alongside their academic support. Pastoral support is also provided by the course leader and students are free to approach either their personal tutor or their course leader with any personal concerns they have.

(f) Disabilities and dyslexia support

This Course has been designed with the anticipatory duty as required by the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) in mind. At implementation and at delivery, the need of individual students will be taken into account. Reasonable adjustments will be made where practicable, in the light of the assessment of student need.
7. **Course specification**

1. **Name of course and highest award**
   MA Screenwriting

2. **Scheme**
   Post-Graduate

3. **Total credit for course**
   180

4. **Possible interim awards**
   PG Cert Screenwriting
   PG Dip Screenwriting

5. **Awarding/validating institution/body**
   London Metropolitan University

6. **Teaching institution**
   London Film School

7. **Course also accredited by**
   London Metropolitan University

8. **Professional body exemptions/accreditation**

9. **External subject benchmarks**

10. **UCAS code** (undergraduate only)

11. **London Met course code**

12. **Route code**
   PCSCRE-X

13. **JACS code**
   W800

14. **Source of funding**
   Private

15. **Approved to run from**
   September 2010

16. **Mode of attendance**
   Full-time

17. **Expected duration of course**
   One year

18. **Organised work experience/sandwich year/year abroad**

19. **Career education, information and guidance**
20. **Admissions**  
   September

21. **Teaching location**  
   London Film School

22. **London Metropolitan University academic department**  
   Humanities, Arts and Languages

23. **Course Leader**  
   Brian Dunnigan

24. **Main educational aims of the course**

   The aim of the course is to enable students who have already shown an aptitude for telling stories for the screen, either through undergraduate study or a portfolio of creative writing, to develop the art and craft of screenwriting to a high level of integrity and originality.

   In addition the course aims to:
   - Encourage students to see their own and others’ creative practice and skills within a critical framework informed by an understanding of historical, cultural, political, ethical and aesthetic issues
   - To develop a student’s understanding of screenwriting and filmmaking as a collaborative process involving everyone from script editors, producers and directors to designers, composers, cinematographers, actors and editors
   - To help students develop a body of work demonstrating the skills necessary for employment in the audiovisual industries in the UK or their country of origin, at levels requiring capacity for creative initiative and personal organization.

25. **Course learning outcomes**

   **Knowledge and Understanding**

   Students completing this course will show:

   1. A clear understanding of the stages of writing from research and development of an idea through revision of a screenplay to production draft
   2. A clear knowledge and understanding of dramatic theory and the craft of screenwriting – with specific emphasis on the feature film
   3. A high level of critical awareness of the relation between their work and the contemporary and historical culture of cinema
   4. A good understanding of the collaborative nature of filmmaking
   5. The ability to work effectively in situations requiring creative and strategic solutions to the technical and/or aesthetic problems of screenwriting and filmmaking
   6. A clearer understanding of their own creative vision, interests and subject matter

   **Teaching/learning strategies and methods**

   Teaching and learning are based on small group practical classes, workshops and one-to-one mentoring in which students exercise their skills and have their work reviewed and discussed
by peers, in-house staff and visiting professionals. Students record and reflect on their progress in their work and research journals.

Lectures, seminars with video/DVD, film screenings and writing exercises, feed into the practical production of story outlines, treatments and screenplays, which are subject to peer review and professional mentoring. Students acquire sophisticated concepts that they use in describing and evaluating their own developing understanding of screenwriting and its relationship to the filmmaking process.

Classes present students with standard industry solutions, historical answers, and the many possibilities various international and contemporary film narratives present. Students also learn alternative approaches to dramaturgy and techniques of film and story analysis that they use in the rewriting process and in discussion with peers, tutors and professional mentors.

The small group practical workshops including work with actors and directors, and the one-to-one mentoring sessions are the focus for developing transferable skills. In addition, working on the crew of a student film can contribute to their skills in communication, collaboration, critical awareness and conflict negotiation. Visiting professionals from the industry help students develop skills specific to the business side of screenwriting and filmmaking.

Assessment

Assessment is based on the written production of a work and research journal each of the three terms, plus a short screenplay and a feature film portfolio in the first term, a first draft of an original feature fiction screenplay in the second term and a revised second draft of that same screenplay in the third term.

The feature film portfolio and screenplay drafts and revisions are the practical outcome of a student's learning and critical understanding of screenwriting and filmmaking. These are assessed as part of the development and expression of a student's individual talent in relationship to the acquisition of essential core skills for successful screenwriting, i.e. character development, cinematic structure, dramatic scene construction, visual progressions, thematic integrity, audience appeal, genre recognition and tone.

The work and research journal documents a student’s intellectual, artistic and personal development as a writer over the course of each term and the year as a whole and is evidence of the continuing process of reflection accompanying any creative endeavour. The Work and Research Journal is assessed as part of a student’s developing skills in written communication, critical self-awareness, film and script analysis, and understanding of the professional and cultural context of their future work and career.

Cognitive (thinking) skills

On completion students will show high-level cognitive skills that will enable them to produce original screenplays that incorporate creative and strategic solutions to the technical/aesthetic problems that arise in the complex context of film development and production.

Practical skills

Students completing the programme will be able to demonstrate their systematic command over a range of interpretive, communicative and craft skills at an appropriate level: these cover research, planning and execution of professional outlines, treatments and screenplays as well as the analytical skills required of script editing and project development from idea to final draft. These skills will be at the service of the student's own creative vision and at a level enabling them to compete securely for employment in the film and television industries.
Transferable skills (incl. those of employability and professional practice)

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. communicate effectively in contexts where difficult, complex and controversial ideas need to be explained and assessed
2. work with others in a group, supporting their contributions and negotiating conflict
3. think critically and produce solutions for self and others
4. be aware of moral and ethical issues as well as the social, cultural and political context of their own and other’s work
5. take responsibility for own work and make appropriate judgements about personal organisation and time-management in the context of independent endeavours
6. present their work and ideas in a variety of professional situations
7. understand audiences and markets, the production and commissioning process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collectively course learning outcomes contribute to the development of the graduate attributes of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Self awareness: to have the attribute of knowing oneself and be able to understand and clarify personal strengths and weaknesses through personal development planning; to be able to develop career management tools and represent one’s own abilities with confidence and self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 Performance in a variety of idioms and contexts: to have the attribute of understanding the limits and applicability of the subject discipline and to be able to perform as a graduate in a variety of idioms and contexts by incorporating into personal, subject and professional practice, a fluent awareness of the subject and the wider picture, and to be able to communicate this effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Creative and ethical: to have the attribute of working through problems and making creative and purposeful change and adaptation with an awareness of ethical and moral codes and demonstrating integrity of conduct, including an awareness of, and respect for, cultural diversity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Links with graduate attributes are referenced in the learning outcomes contained in each of the four subsections.
## 26. Course structure diagram

**DIAGRAM FOR POSTGRADUATE COURSES**

**Course Title:** MA Screenwriting  
**Course Leader:** Brian Dunnigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Credit Points</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PG Cert</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity and working Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Screen Stories</td>
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<td>Elements of Dramatic Writing</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Writing the Short Film</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feature Film 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>Contemporary Cinema</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Writer as Director</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cinema Specific Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Business of Film 1</td>
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<td>Summer</td>
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**DIAGRAM FOR POSTGRADUATE AWARD TITLES**

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<th>Notes</th>
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<td>PG Dip</td>
<td>MA Screenwriting</td>
<td>120 CATS POINTS</td>
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<td>Masters</td>
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<td>180 CATS POINTS</td>
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</table>
27  Assessment diagram

DIAGRAM FOR POSTGRADUATE COURSES

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<td>Submission week no.</td>
<td>Weighting</td>
<td>Submission week no.</td>
<td>Weighting</td>
<td>Submission week no.</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>12</td>
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</table>

28  Additional general comments (if appropriate)

The programme is non-modular. It is composed of three units to be taken sequentially. Unit 1: The Screenwriter’s Craft; Unit 2: The Screenwriter’s Practice; Unit 3: Writing the Feature Film.

Each unit will carry 60 credits at MA level. The result for the first two units shall be pass or fail. The result for the third unit shall be pass with distinction, pass or fail. The corresponding awards will be Post-graduate Certificate (Unit 1 passed), Post-graduate Diploma (Units 1-2 passed) and MA Screenwriting (Units 1-3 passed).

29  Standard entry requirements

- The majority of applicants will have an honours degree.
- The Course Leader will consider applicants with non-standard entry requirements or academic background on an individual basis.

Applicants must demonstrate suitability through a portfolio of written work.

In addition they may show other work that reveals originality of conception or execution in filmmaking or another aspect of the visual arts.

In line with the university’s policy on extending access in higher education, the admissions procedures for the course are designed to make available the opportunity to study to as many students as possible providing they have the ability to benefit from it and a reasonable expectation of achieving an award.

Applications from students of all ages, social, ethnic and educational backgrounds are welcomed. The nature of the course is such that most of the applicants will have a background in creative writing and/or film or media experience. The admissions policy recognizes that there will be some outstanding applicants with backgrounds in other disciplines and work experiences including those without standard undergraduate qualifications.

- **Entry Requirements** - Evidence of the following will be taken into account:
  - A first or second class UK honours degree in a relevant area, or a European or other equivalent.
  - Fluent English.
  - Experience and skills in writing and or filmmaking to a high enough standard, supported by evidence.

- **Criteria for entry** - Entry criteria include showing evidence for:
The capacity to learn and develop
- Creative ability in the area of fiction writing
- Visualisation skills
- Communication skills
- Ambition in and commitment to film study and screenwriting practice
- Knowledge of and engagement with contemporary film culture

The need to follow and understand the intensive course of lectures, and the high pressure of group work make it imperative that all students must also have a satisfactory knowledge of the English language.

- **Evidence of such knowledge would be:**
  - Minimum TOEFL at Paper Grad: 550 or Computer Grade: 213 or Internet Based Grade: 79-80
  - Minimum IELTS with a score of 6 and no element below 5.5.
  - Minimum Cambridge Proficiency Grade C
  - Other evidence of spoken or written fluency.

Acceptances are conditional on a suitable knowledge of English. Students may be refused entry on presenting themselves if their command of English is considered to be insufficient. Students so refused entry will be invited to attend a language school and, after three months, will be entitled to enroll, provided that by then they have reached the required standard.

The London Film School reserves the right to terminate the studies of, and exclude from the School, anyone it considers unsuitable to continue with the course.

Applicants must demonstrate suitability through a portfolio of written work. In addition they might show other work that revealed originality of conception or execution in filmmaking or another aspect of the visual arts.

Applicants must fill in an application form together with a portfolio of written work. Where possible applicants will be interviewed.

**Admissions procedure**

Applicants must apply with the appropriate materials by the closing date of 1st June prior to the September start of any given academic year. All written material is then read by departmental staff and a short list of candidates are selected for interview. Interviews are conducted by two staff members on site at LFS. All applicants are interviewed by the same two members of staff who are then able to discuss the interview in relation to the applicant’s submitted work. If the applicant is unable to attend in person, the interview is conducted by telephone.

All applicants are usually notified within a month of the closing date for submission and final places on the course are allocated before the end of the current academic year. Depending on the quality of application in any given year, there are 15-20 places on the course.

On being awarded a place on the MA Screenwriting course, each successful applicant is sent an introductory letter which contains an outline timetable, reading and viewing list and three writing exercises to be submitted on the first week of term.

**Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)**

Students who have been given credit for prior learning in accordance with the APL Procedures (see Section 10.1) shall be exempted from taking those module(s) against which credit has already been given. Credit may be awarded against named modules or as pathway or elective credit. The minimum amount of APL credit that may be given to an individual student shall be equivalent to one module at any level. The maximum amount of APL credit possible is equivalent to a maximum 50% of the volume of the intended award. In order to comply with
visa requirements, APL credit for International students shall only be awarded for one module or a full semester. A student may be awarded a mixture of APCL and APEL credit.

A postgraduate student may claim APL credit up to 50% towards an award. Students must achieve at least 50% of the learning towards an award while enrolled on a course leading to that award of this University.

30. Career opportunities

A recent report prepared by Skillset for the UK Film Council emphasises the market demand for the kind of screenwriting course taught at LFS. These bodies have been charged by the government to support the development of a viable film industry in the UK and have selected the training of scriptwriters as one of their key priorities.

The course provides the student with the understanding of differing markets, genres, styles and media. Although the emphasis of the course is writing for cinema, the skills developed are readily transferable and will provide a practical foundation for graduates’ successful work in television and related media.

31. Course summary

The screenwriting course will fill a full calendar year and is aimed at writers committed to working intensively and at speed on feature projects that are full-time rather than part-time endeavours. The course is also aimed at those who are excited by filmmaking and cinema – who are keen to understand what is distinctive and collaborative about the screenwriter’s role in that process – and equally keen to work professionally within the film and television industries in the UK and/or their country of origin.

The focus is on the development of the individual writer and his/her unique voice and visions through an emphasis on writing exercises, peer group feedback and one-to-one mentoring from practicing writers and filmmakers.

Unit details

The programme is non-modular. It is composed of three units to be taken sequentially. The course is full-time only and lasts one year. Some of the component classes are term specific and others run continuously across the whole programme.

Each unit will carry 60 credits at ‘M’ level. The result for the first two units shall be pass or fail. The result for the third unit shall be pass with distinction, pass or fail. The corresponding awards will be Post-graduate Certificate (Unit 1 passed), Post-graduate Diploma (Units 1-2 passed) and MA Screenwriting (Units 1-3 passed).

Unit 1: The Screenwriter’s Craft
Unit 2: The Screenwriter’s Practice
Unit 3: Writing the Feature Film
Title
Unit 1: The Screenwriters Craft

Level
M

Leader
Brian Dunnigan

Home Academic department
HAL

Teaching Location
Collaborative/Off site

Teaching Semester
Autumn

Teaching Mode
Day

Type
PROJ

Credit rating
60

Summary
This unit provides an introductory and theoretical framework for the practical work with an emphasis on the writer’s personal development. It includes an overview of dramatic principles as applied to a distinctively cinematic approach to storytelling. It also encourages a critical evaluation of those principles in relation to the creative process and the development of original work for the screen.

Aims

- To stimulate creativity and encourage originality
- To develop screenwriting skills in students
- To develop an awareness of the principles of storytelling and dramaturgy behind those skills
- To assist the student, place dramaturgy within an historical and international context and to encourage different approaches to screenwriting
- To develop an awareness of the short film as a distinctive cinematic form
- To clarify the relationship of script to screen
- To encourage a critical ability in evaluating screenplays and films
- To build a common creative and critical vocabulary to facilitate creative and productive collaboration with other screenwriters and directors, in the first instance, leading towards an understanding of how to communicate with others involved intimately in the process of translating written word to moving image
Objectives
By the end of this module the student will have produced:

- A work and research journal
- A short film screenplay
- A feature film portfolio

Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of the module students are able to demonstrate that they have:

- A good understanding of the creative process and the place of critique, feedback, rewriting and revision in that process
- The ability to give and take criticism within a supportive group context
- Developed an approach to their work which includes research, planning and outlining
- A clear understanding of the contextual framework for the study and practice of screenwriting and its relationship to filmmaking
- A knowledge of the variety of approaches to dramaturgy
- The ability to conceive, develop and write a cinematic short film script
- An understanding of the different approaches to adaptation
- The ability to evaluate screenplays and films across a range of criteria including technical, aesthetic and commercial
- The ability to write a screenplay that shows a clear understanding of narrative and dramatic principles

Syllabus

- **Creativity and Working Methods:** the writer as source of material, writing exercises, originality, cognitive and affective knowledge, research, developing ideas, established screenwriters and how they approach their work. A variety of exercises drawing from a variety of sources, including but not limited to painting, sculpture, music, dance, improvisation, poetry, dreams.
- **Elements of Dramatic Writing:** workshop and exercise based approach to film dramaturgy including theme and premise, dramatic universe, distinction between film and television writing, dramatic structure and characterisation, dialogue, writing styles and visualisation. Critique and historical context of dramatic theory. Alternative paradigms, multi-narratives and an overview of international approaches to screenwriting and filmmaking. Includes lecture/seminars, script and film analysis. Written exercises.
- **Film History and Analysis I:** a series of lectures covering the early history of film to the masters of world cinema. Aesthetics; criticism; cinema and society; genres; directors’ strategies for realising scripts. Students from both the Screenwriting and Filmmaking MA. Includes some evening screenings.
- **Writing the Short Film:** lecture/seminar and tutorials. A practical and analytical exploration of the short as a distinctive genre. Includes one-to-one and peer group script development. By the end of the first term students will have written a short screenplay that may be produced by MA Filmmaking students.
- **Feature Film Project 1:** Script development including research, synopsis and treatment, step outline and scene-by-scene breakdown, critique and rewrites. Ideas and outline for a feature film screenplay.
Assessment

Assessment is based on criteria defined in learning outcomes. Assessment for this module is by consideration of:

- A work and research journal
- A ten-minute short screenplay
- A feature film portfolio

In order to pass the unit students will have to pass all of the above.

Assessment criteria

A student who passes the unit will have shown a good understanding of the principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen that will include reference to the following aspects of fictional writing for the screen:

- Concept/premise/theme
- Setting/story world
- Originality/flair
- Individual voice
- Presentation formatting/clarity
- Characterisation
- Dialogue
- Dramatic and Cinematic structure
- Scene writing
- Plot/Sub-plot
- Visual and Aural motifs and developments

A pass means that the writer demonstrates an understanding of and ability to conceive:

- a dramatic premise that expresses a clear theme
- a credible fictional world that utilises details of temporal and physical setting, mood and style to engage an audience
- a screen story that is imaginative, personal yet universal, and avoids stereotype and cliché
- a screenplay that is clear and concise in presentation and that utilises interesting descriptive detail of character, setting and action to engage a reader and create the idea and image flow of a distinctively cinematic narrative
- well-rounded and clearly motivated characters who can develop, change and interact in a credible way that engenders audience recognition and engagement
- dialogue that is credible and consistent with the established characters and story world and that is utilised to enhance subtext, tone and characterisation
- well-constructed scenes with focus, dramatic shape and details of mood, characterisation, theme and imagery as well as narrative development
- a dramatic structure that includes an understanding of set-up, development and resolution, as well as narrative techniques of suspense and surprise, planting and pay-off, discovery and reversal, crisis and climax
- a screenplay with a strong visual structure in the details of setting, characterisation and action, as well as the imaginative use of imagery to create mood, atmosphere and metaphorical meaning
- a screenplay aimed at a specific market and audience
A student who fails the unit will have shown two or more of the following:

- a failure to understand three or more of the basic principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen as outlined above
- a lack of understanding in the specifics of writing a short film screenplay
- an inability to conceive, develop and outline a story for a feature film project
- an inability to reflect critically on their work and that of their peers
- a disregard for the collaborative process
- consistent failure to provide critical, creative and constructive feedback in seminars and workshops
- repeatedly missing interim and final deadlines for assessed work and due dates for other assignments
- a series of unexcused absences from classes

Bibliography

**Creativity and Storytelling**


**Short Stories**


**Narrative Theory**


**Screenwriting**

Baker, G P. *Dramatic Technique.*
Frehsham, R. *Teach Yourself Screenwriting.* Hodder, 1996.

**Short Screenplay Texts**


**Short Film Production**

Irving, D. & Rea, P. *Producing and Directing the Short Film and Video*. NY: Focal Press, 2000

**Short Films on Video/DVD**

Jane Campion: *Three Short Films*. Connoisseur Video
*Three Shorts by Hal Hartley*. Tartan Video, 1989
*The Short Films of David Lynch*. DVD 2002

Big Stories Small Flashes *9 Short Films by 9 New Directors*
Cinema 16 *British Short Films*. 2003
Cinema 16 *European Short Films*. 2004

**Select Filmography**

*Battleship Potemkin* Sergei Eisenstein
*Nosferatu* Friedrich Murnau
*Stagecoach* John Ford/Dudley Nichols
*Bringing Up Baby* Howard Hawks
*Matter of Life and Death* Powell/Pressburger
*The Third Man* Carol Reed/Graham Greene
*Bicycle Thieves* Vittorio de Sica
*Germany Year Zero* Roberto Rossellini
*Hiroshima Mon Amour* Alain Resnais
*Notorious* Alfred Hitchcock/Ben Hecht
*The Silence* Ingmar Bergman
*The Apartment* Billy Wilder
*Touch of Evil* Orson Welles
*A Bout de Souffle* J-L Godard
*Love in the Afternoon* Eric Rohmer
*Ashes and Diamonds* Andrzej Wajda
*The Fireman’s Ball* Milos Foreman
*Belle du Jour* Luis Bunuel/Jean-Claude Carriere
*Faces* John Cassavetes
*Mean Streets* Martin Scorsese
*Kes* Ken Loach
*Amarcord* Federico Fellini
*Sans Soleil* Chris Marker
*Annie Hall* Woody Allen
*Get Carter* Mike Hodges
*Chinatown* Roman Polanski/Robert Towne
*L’Argent* Robert Bresson
*Witness* Peter Weir
Alien Ridley Scott
Blue Velvet David Lynch
Decalogue Kristof Kieslowski/
Barton Fink Joel and Ethan Cohen
Life is Sweet Mike Leigh
Raise the Red Lantern Zhang Yimou
Pulp Fiction Quentin Tarantino
Chung King Express Wong Kar Wai
Close-Up Abbas Kiarostami
Simple Men Hal Hartley
Leningrad Cowboys Aki Kaurismaki
Trainspotting Danny Boyle/John Hodge
Ratcatcher Lyn Ramsay
Amores Perros Guillermo Arriaga
Momento Paul Thomas Anderson
Festen Thomas Vinterberg/
Adaptation Spike Jones/Charlie Kaufman
Lilja 4-ever Lukas Moodysson
The Return Andrey Zvyagintsev

Annual Reference Books

The Filmmakers’ Yearbook. A+C Black
BFI Film and Television Handbook. BFI Publishing
A Career Handbook for TV, Radio, Film, Video and Interactive Media. A+C Black
Contacts. Spotlight
The Hollywood Creative Directory. Lone Eagle Publishing
Writers and Artists Year Book. A+C Black
The Writers Handbook. Macmillan

Specialist Bookshops

The Cinema Store
Upper St. Martins Lane
Grant and Cutler
55-57 Great Marlborough Street
Off Stage Bookshop
37 Chalk Farm Road
The Screenwriters Store
157-168 Blackfriars Road, SE1 8EZ
Cinema Bookshop at the BFI Southbank

Library

BFI National Library
21 Stephen Street
London W1T 1LN
Title
Unit 2: The Screenwriter’s Practice

Level
M

Leader
Brian Dunnigan

Home Academic department
HAL

Teaching Location
Collaborative/Off site

Teaching Semester
Spring

Teaching Mode
Day

Type
PROJ

Credit rating
60

Prerequisites and co-requisites
Pass Unit 1

Summary
This unit places screenwriting in the context of film history and the filmmaking process. It also illuminates the economic and industrial context for film production, distribution and exhibition and the role of the writer and the screenplay within that context. Group work and exercises will focus on visualisation and cinema specific aspects of screenwriting and includes work with actors, directors and editors.

The main focus of the practical work is the writing of the first draft of an original feature film screenplay.

Aims

- To encourage a cinematic approach to screenwriting
- To provide the student with a social, political, moral and ethical context for their writing
- To give students practical experience of screenwriting as a collaborative process
- To give the writer a practical understanding of the director’s role and how a director works with a writer
- To deepen each student’s understanding of the screenplay as the creative and technical template for performance and visualisation
• To familiarise students with the international film industry and film development, its similarities and differences from country to country
• To help the student establish a creative mentoring relationship with a practicing professional

Objectives

By the end of this module the student will have produced:

• A work and research journal
• A first draft for an original feature fiction film

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the module students should have:

• A good academic and practical knowledge of the history and theory of film
• An understanding of the process from script to screen
• The ability to work with others in a team
• A good understanding of the role of the screenwriter in the production process
• A good knowledge of existing opportunities in the film and TV industries
• Be acquainted with matters relating to copyright and contracts

Syllabus

• *Film History and Analysis II*: continuing a series of lectures on the history of cinema and filmic narrative. Directing and scriptwriting strategies. Students from both the Screenwriting and Filmmaking MA. Includes some evening screenings.
• *Contemporary Cinema*: classes on current world cinema, including visiting filmmakers and screenwriters from the UK and abroad. Debate, discussion, professional contacts.
• *The Writer as Director*: visualisation; understanding the director’s perspective; scene breakdown and shooting script; writer/director relationship; the actor’s craft as applied to the writer; editing (both in development and post-production) and the writer. Seminars and practical exercises including shooting and editing a scene and working on student films.
• *Cinema Specific Writing*: theatre and literature, adaptation, cinematic narrative, visualisation, sound and image, screenplay language, the relationship between screenplay and directed film. Rewriting and collaboration. Exercises and film analysis.
• *The Business of Film I*: the industry context for writers including commissioning, development finance, writer’s contracts. The development process from outline to final draft. Lecture/Seminars, including sessions with visiting practitioners. Includes some evening and weekend sessions.
• *Feature Film Project II*: the practice of writing and developing a rough first draft (a minimum of 70 typed pages, following accepted industry format). Taking notes and applying them through revision. Providing feedback on other projects in development. Seminar, tutorials.
Assessment

Assessment is based on criteria defined in learning outcomes. Assessment for this module is by consideration of:

- A work and research journal
- A first draft screenplay for an original feature fiction film

Assessment criteria

A student who passes the unit will have shown a good understanding of the principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen, which will include reference to the following aspects of fictional writing for the screen:

- Concept/premise/theme
- Setting/story world
- Originality/flair
- Individual voice
- Presentation-formatting/clarity
- Characterisation
- Dialogue
- Dramatic and Cinematic structure
- Scene writing
- Plot/Sub-plot
- Visual and Aural motifs and developments

A pass means that the writer demonstrates an understanding of and ability to conceive:

- a dramatic premise that expresses a clear theme.
- a credible fictional world that utilises details of temporal and physical setting, mood and style to engage an audience
- a screen story that is imaginative, personal yet universal, and avoids stereotype and cliché
- a screenplay that is clear and concise in presentation and that utilises interesting descriptive detail of character, setting and action to engage a reader and create the idea and image flow of a distinctively cinematic narrative
- well-rounded and clearly motivated characters who can develop, change and interact in a credible way that engenders audience recognition and engagement
- dialogue that is credible and consistent with the established characters and story world and that is utilised to enhance subtext, tone and characterisation
- well-constructed scenes with focus, dramatic shape and details of mood, characterisation, theme and imagery as well as narrative development
- a dramatic structure that includes an understanding of set-up, development and resolution, as well as narrative techniques of suspense and surprise, planting and pay-off, discovery and reversal, crisis and climax
- a screenplay with a strong visual structure in the details of setting, characterisation and action as well as the imaginative use of imagery to create mood, atmosphere and metaphorical meaning
- a screenplay aimed at a specific market and audience
A student who fails the unit will have shown two or more of the following:

- a failure to understand three or more of the basic principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen as outlined above
- an inability to conceive, develop and deliver the first draft of an original feature film screenplay
- an inability to reflect critically on their work and that of their peers
- a disregard for the collaborative process
- a consistent failure to provide critical, creative and constructive feedback in seminars and workshops
- repeatedly missing interim and final deadlines for assessed work and due dates for other assignments
- a series of unexcused absences from classes

Bibliography

Godard, J-L. *Godard on Godard*. De Capo Press, 1996.
Kieslowski, K. Kieslowski on Kieslowski (1993) Faber
Murch, W. In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing. Silman-James, 2000.
Pudovkin, V I. Film Technique and Film Acting. New York: Grove, 1960.
Stanislavski, C. An Actor Prepares. London; Methuen, 1980.

Industry Periodicals

Variety
Screen International
Screen Finance
Broadcast
Sight and Sound
Filmmaker
Black Filmmaker Magazine
Vertigo

Screenwriting Magazines

Scenario (US)
www.scenariomag.com subscriptions: 001 800 222 2654
Creative Screenwriting (US)
www.creativescreenwriting.com
Title
Unit 3: Writing the Feature Film

Level
M

Leader
Brian Dunnigan

Home Academic department
HAL

Teaching Location
Collaborative/Off site

Teaching Semester
Summer

Teaching Mode
Day

Type
PROJ

Credit rating
60

Prerequisites and co-requisites
Pass Unit 1 and Unit 2

Summary
This unit focuses on the development of the key practical work of the Masters programme – the writing and development of a feature film project, supported by one-to-one mentoring and small group tutorials.
This unit also continues the series of lectures on the history of cinema with evening screenings built around discussion and contact with contemporary filmmakers and writers. Visiting writers, producers and agents along with specialist workshops on television writing and adaptation provides the industrial context and preparation for the professional world.

The final screenplay along with an outline of project development and the work and research journal complete the assessable work for the Masters programme.

Aims
- To support the development of strong and original ideas
- To encourage the research and development of those ideas
- To promote creative development through a series of draft screenplays
- To support understanding of the revision and re-writing process
- To encourage a distinctively cinematic approach from idea to draft screenplay
- To provide a stimulating and challenging mentoring relationship with an industry professional
- To support the student through this process
• To provide an arena in which risks can be taken and horizons expanded
• To support the understanding of the role of producers, development executives and script editors in the development process
• To widen the student’s professional experience and enhance his/her understanding of the industrial relationships involved in realising a screenwriting project as a feature films for production, distribution and exhibition

Objectives

By the end of this module the student will have produced:

• A work and research journal
• A second draft feature-length screenplay that shows a clear understanding of dramaturgical and screenwriting principles, as well as integrity and originality

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module students will be able to demonstrate:

• The evaluative, analytical and creative skills necessary for the writing of a feature film screenplay to professional standards
• The development of a professional approach to the practice of screenwriting
• A network of other writers, directors and producers working in the industry

Syllabus

• Contemporary Cinema: classes on current world cinema, including visiting filmmakers and screenwriters. Debate, discussion, professional contacts.
• Film History and Analysis III: continuing a series of lectures on the history of cinema and filmic narrative. Students from both the Screenwriting and Filmmaking MA. Includes some evening screenings.
• The Business of Film II: the industry context for writers including copyright, packaging, self-employment skills, agents, options, markets. Lecture/Seminars, including sessions with visiting practitioners in media law, development, finance and production. Includes some evening and weekend sessions.
• Specialist workshops: writing for television; adaptation; comedy; script development and script editing
• The Feature Film III: the revision and re-writing process; development of the first draft through two drafts and a final revision of no less than 90 pages and no more than 120. At the beginning of the third unit, each student will be assigned a mentor who will provide key support in their MA project development. Supported by small group tutorials.

Assessment

Assessment is based on criteria defined in learning outcomes. Assessment for this module is by consideration of:

• A work and research journal
• A second draft (revised) feature fiction screenplay
Assessment criteria

A student who passes the unit will have shown a good understanding of the principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen, which will include reference to the following aspects of fictional writing for the screen:

- Concept/premise/theme
- Setting/story world
- Originality/flair
- Individual voice
- Presentation-formatting/clarity
- Characterization
- Dialogue
- Dramatic and Cinematic structure
- Scene writing
- Plot/Sub-plot
- Visual and Aural motifs and developments

A pass means that the writer demonstrates an understanding of and ability to integrate most of the following in their work:

- a dramatic premise that expresses a clear theme.
- a credible fictional world that utilises details of temporal and physical setting, mood and style to engage an audience
- a screen story that is imaginative, personal yet universal, and avoids stereotype and cliché
- a screenplay that is clear and concise in presentation and that utilises interesting descriptive detail of character, setting and action to engage a reader and create the idea and image flow of a distinctively cinematic narrative
- well-rounded and clearly motivated characters who can develop, change and interact in a credible way that engenders audience recognition and engagement
- dialogue that is credible and consistent with the established characters and story world and that is utilised to enhance subtext, tone and characterisation
- well-constructed scenes with focus, dramatic shape and details of mood, characterisation, theme and imagery as well as narrative development
- a dramatic structure that includes an understanding of set-up, development and resolution, as well as narrative techniques of suspense and surprise, planting and pay-off, discovery and reversal, crisis and climax
- a screenplay with a strong visual structure in the details of setting, characterisation and action as well as the imaginative use of imagery to create mood, atmosphere and metaphorical meaning
- a screenplay aimed at a specific market and audience

A student who fails the unit will have shown two or more of the following:

- a failure to understand three or more of the basic principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen as outlined above
- an inability to conceive, develop and deliver a polished second draft screenplay for an original feature film
- an inability to reflect critically on their work and that of their peers
- a disregard for the collaborative process
- a consistent failure to provide critical, creative and constructive feedback in seminars and workshops
- repeatedly missing interim and final deadlines for assessed work and due dates for other assignments
- a series of unexcused absences from classes

Bibliography

Fleischer, J. *Writing the Feature Film*. Sources/Media II, 1995.
Voytilla, S & Petri, S. *Writing the Comedy Film*. Focal Press, 2003
Original Screenplays

www.thescreenwriterstore.co.uk
www.harvestmoon.com
www.scriptshack.com

Scripts On-line

www.dailyscript.com
www.scriptdude.com
www.script-o-rama.com
www.simplyscripts.com
www.joblo.com
www.scriptcrawler.net
www.iscriptdb.com
http://geocities.com/classicmoviescripts/
www.movie-page.com/movie_scripts.htm

Writers' Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom/
www.sources.deu.net
www.writerswrite.com
www.writing.org.uk
www.writerswebsite.com

Filmmakers' Sites

www.bfi.org.uk
www.britfilms.com
www.exposure.co.uk
www.filmfour.com/mm/mmHome.jsp
www.mandy.com
www.netribution.co.uk
www.shootingpeople.org
www.tdfilm.com
www.theknowledgeonline.com
www.screendaily.com
9. **Course timetable**

(a) **Timetable**

**Taught Course Timetable**

A rough first term timetable is handed out during Welcome Week. Timetables for Terms 2 + 3 are available at the start of each term. Below are indicative timetables for each term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>EVENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Writers’ Gym (weeks 2-6)</td>
<td>Elements of Dramatic Writing (weeks 1-10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Feature Film Development Groups (weeks 6-10)</td>
<td>Short Film Workshops (weeks 2-5)</td>
<td>Feature Film Development Groups (weeks 6-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Film Style (weeks 1-10)</td>
<td>Writers Practice Industry Guests (week 6-8)</td>
<td>Film Society Screenings (weeks 2-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- The above timetable is an indicative guide to the taught classwork. A detailed timetable will be posted on the notice board on the Friday before the week following.
- The week and the term are front-loaded with the bulk of taught classwork usually timetabled Monday to Wednesday during the first eight weeks.
- There is a two week block of writing time for completing the project work (weeks 9/10).
- Each student is allocated a Personal Tutor whom they will see twice per term.
- Deadlines: Short Film Screenplay – Thursday Week 10; Feature Film Portfolio – Thursday Week 11; Work and Research Journal – Friday Week 12.
- From the end of Week 11 through the end of Week 12 is given over to screenings and critical feedback on MA Filmmaking.
## Term 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>EVENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Writers Practice Industry Guests (week 6-8)</td>
<td>Elements of Dramatic Writing (weeks 1-10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Feature Film Development Groups (weeks 1-8)</td>
<td>Feature Film Development Groups (weeks 1-8)</td>
<td>Film Society Screenings (weeks 1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Film Style (weeks 1-10)</td>
<td>Writers Practice Industry Guests (week 6-8)</td>
<td>Film Society Screenings (weeks 1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Film Society Screenings (weeks1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Three week block of time to complete written work (wk 8-10)
- Submissions: Feature Film 1st Draft – End Week 11; Work and Research Journal – End Week 12
- From the end of Week 11 through the end of Week 12 is given over to screenings and critical feedback on MA Filmmaking

## Term 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>EVENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Creative Rewriting (Weeks 1-4)</td>
<td>Elements of Dramatic Writing (weeks 1-10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Feature Film Development Groups (weeks 1-8)</td>
<td>Feature Film Development Groups (weeks 1-8)</td>
<td>Film Society Screenings (weeks 1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Film Style (weeks 1-10)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Film Society Screenings (weeks 1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Film Society Screenings (weeks 1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist Workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Four week block of time to complete written work
- Submission dates: Feature Film 2nd Draft – End Week 11; Work and Research Journal –End Week 12
10. Marking and Assessment

(a) Marking and grades

The London Film School provides you with marks and grades for the work that you submit for assessment. The standard classification is pass or fail with distinction awarded at MA level.

(b) Your responsibilities concerning Assessment

You have a responsibility to ensure that all assessed work is completed and submitted by the published deadline and that examinations are attended in accordance with the published timetable. You also have a responsibility to ensure that all work submitted is your own and that it is appropriately referenced. The London Film School does not tolerate cheating of any kind. You are strongly advised to familiarise yourself with these regulations.

(c) Handing in Assessments

When handing in coursework assessments you must ensure that you have understood and followed all the information provided by the course leader.

Submitted work must be submitted by email attachment to the course administrator by the published deadline. Work must include a clear title page detailing the student's name, unit, and the title of their piece.

(d) Mitigating circumstances

Mitigating circumstances are unforeseen circumstances that have prevented a student from submitting an item of assessed work for the published deadline date, or from attending an examination.

Process for the submission and consideration of claims

You will need to submit a form providing details and supporting evidence of the particular circumstances that affected your studies. Forms, which also detail the criteria for judging claims, can be obtained either from the course administrator or the course leader. The University defines Mitigating Circumstances ‘as circumstances that are acute, severe, unforeseen and outside a student’s control that occur immediately before or during the assessment period in question’. Claims may be submitted in relation to late coursework (submitted up to 14 days (excluding bank holidays and the University’s Christmas and Easter vacation periods) later than the published coursework deadline; non-submission of coursework; or non-attendance at an examination).

If your claim for mitigating circumstances is accepted you will normally be able to sit your examination or submit your coursework at the next assessment opportunity. Please see the University’s Academic Regulations for further information on mitigating circumstances.
(e) Publication of results

Students will be notified of their results at the end of each semester by email attachment. This will be in the form of one assessment template per piece of coursework, completed by the assessor.

(f) Action in the event of failure

Reassessment

You would normally be entitled to be reassessed on one occasion in any module for which a failing mark has been awarded. You will not be entitled to be reassessed in any item of assessment for which a passing mark has been awarded.

On the basis of this review a recovery plan to complete the level may be agreed or you may be counselled to leave the course and/or to seek readmission on a different course.

Section 3.2 of the Academic Regulations (see 18-29) details the full regulations on reassessment and retaking.

Should a student fail a unit or a component assessment of a unit, s/he will be entitled to one reassessment in that unit, at a time to be determined by the Assessment Board. The Assessment Board may also demand that the student retake this unit (with attendance). Students will not normally be allowed to progress from Unit 1 to Unit 2 or from Unit 2 to Unit 3 until the previous unit has been passed.

11. Study resources and facilities

(a) Library

Screenwriting students will have access to the video and book library at LFS as well as the current library facilities at London Metropolitan University and the specialist film library of the British Film Institute. There are also two excellent public libraries nearby in Westminster and Camden with extensive media and film sections.

In addition they can make use of the LFS membership of the National Film Theatre and of the London Film Festival to develop their knowledge of film culture and history.

Writers will have access to a dedicated IT room with five computers and Final Draft screenwriting software as well as a laptop facility in the coffee bar for interactive work with the filmmaking students.

LFS Library Resources

Existing resources:

Technical literature (manuals etc.)
These are held by departments such as camera and editing etc. The majority of students working in these areas usually buy these manuals. The School sells them at a reduced price.
Periodical literature
The School subscribes to the main periodicals referred to in the course: *Sight and Sound, American Cinematographer, Screen International, Broadcast*.

Scripts
The school library has a wide range of screenplays for reference purposes and all the key texts on screenwriting theory and practice that are referred to on the reading lists.

Films
The school holdings of features or other released material is:
- DVD’s: approximately 1000 titles
- 16mm prints: 127 titles
- 35mm prints: 30 titles

Books
The library is well stocked with books, some historical, some around contemporary film practices.

Other Resources
LFS has a well-established relationship with the UK and international film industry and is closely involved in a network of film schools, professional workshops and training bodies. This partnership with industry and the international connection, including future exchange programmes is a valuable resource for the MA Screenwriting students.

Photocopying and binding
Students have access to printing facilities in the production office at the Shelton Street building.

Access to other libraries
Once students have been issued with a LMU student card they are allowed access to the Library at London Metropolitan University. Students are also eligible to gain readers membership at the British Library.

Media resources

(b) Computers and IT

Computer suites
Computers are available with internet access in the Production Office at the school. WiFi is also available in all areas of the school.

Moodle
Moodle is the school’s resource site for students. It includes online resources for courses and classes as well as facilities for submitting coursework and communicating with tutors.

(c) University access

All students registered on a London Metropolitan University course have access to University libraries and its leisure facilities. However, students may not borrow books from the University as the London Film School is responsible for providing you with the necessary learning resources.
12. Academic Regulations

The Academic Regulations governing your course are similar to the University’s academic regulations. For sight of these, go to www.londonmet.ac.uk/academic-regulations/

Withdrawals and re-registrations

Students who withdraw from the course for more than a year may have to be re-interviewed and accept conditions for re-entry.

Assessment

Units will be assessed as pass and fail. In the case of Unit 3, the result ‘pass with distinction’ will also be available to students who pass Unit 3 but also demonstrate confident and consistent individually defined skill, originality and depth of thought at an appropriate professional level in screenwriting.

Requirements for awards

A Postgraduate Certificate in Screenwriting shall be awarded to a student who has passed Unit 1.

A Postgraduate Diploma in Screenwriting shall be awarded to a student who has passed Units 1 and 2.

A Masters Degree in Screenwriting shall be awarded to a student who has passed Units 1, 2 and 3 and has not had more than one reassessment.

A Masters Degree in Screenwriting with distinction shall be awarded to a student who has passed Units 1 and 2 without reassessment and Unit 3, with distinction.

Assessment criteria

A student who passes each unit will show a good understanding of the principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen, which will include reference to the following aspects of fictional writing for the screen:

- Concept/premise/theme
- Setting/story world
- Originality/flair
- Individual voice
- Presentation- formatting/clarity
- Characterization
- Dialogue
- Dramatic and Cinematic structure
- Scene writing
- Plot /Sub-plot
- Visual and Aural motifs and developments

A pass means that the writer demonstrates an understanding of and ability to conceive:

- a dramatic premise that expresses a clear theme.
- a credible fictional world that utilises details of temporal and physical setting, mood and style to engage an audience
• a screen story which is imaginative, personal yet universal and avoids stereotype and cliché
• a screenplay that is clear and concise in presentation and that utilises interesting descriptive detail of character, setting and action to engage a reader and create the idea and image flow of a distinctively cinematic narrative
• well-rounded and clearly motivated characters who can develop, change and interact in a credible way that engenders audience recognition and engagement
• dialogue which is credible and consistent with the established characters and story world and that is utilised to enhance subtext, tone and characterisation
• well-constructed scenes with focus, dramatic shape and details of mood, characterisation, theme and imagery as well as narrative development
• a dramatic structure that includes an understanding of set-up, development and resolution, as well as narrative techniques of suspense and surprise, planting and payoff, discovery and reversal, crisis and climax
• a screenplay with a strong visual structure in the details of setting, characterisation and action as well as the imaginative use of imagery to create mood, atmosphere and metaphorical meaning
• a screenplay aimed at a specific market and audience

A student who fails the unit will have shown two or more of the following:

• a failure to understand three or more of the basic principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen as outlined above
• a lack of understanding in the specifics of writing a short film screenplay
• (Unit 1 only)
• an inability to conceive, develop and deliver a story for a feature film project
• an inability to reflect critically on their work and that of their peers
• a disregard for the collaborative process
• a consistent failure to provide critical, creative and constructive feedback in seminars and workshops
• a series of unexcused absences from classes
• repeatedly missing interim and final deadlines for assessed work and due dates for other assignments

Distinction

A student may be awarded a distinction if in the opinion of the two internal and one external assessor the work is of outstanding merit. This is equivalent to a Grade A on the European Credit Transfer Scheme.

A student who achieves a distinction will have shown an excellent understanding of the principles of narrative and dramatic writing for the screen, which will include reference to the following aspects of fictional writing for the screen:

• Concept/premise/theme
• Setting/story world
• Originality/flair
• Presentation and writing style
• Characterization/Dialogue
• Scene writing
• Plot structure/Sub-plots
• Visual realization
A student who achieves a distinction will also have shown:

- an exceptional ability to conceive, develop and outline a story for a feature film project
- a high ability to give and receive feedback creatively on their work and the work of others
- evidence of a high standard of critical and reflective thought on their work

**Responsibilities of students**

It shall be the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with the assessment regulations and with the examination and coursework submission timetables to ascertain when opportunities for assessment arise.

It shall be the responsibility of students to submit work for discussion and assessment by the specified deadlines.

It shall be the responsibility of students who believe they have valid reasons for non-submission of an item of assessed work to familiarise themselves with the procedures for making a claim and the circumstances in which they are allowed to do so (see under Reassessment below).

It shall be the responsibility of students who believe their academic performance in an examination or in an item of coursework submitted by the due deadline, was significantly impaired by mitigating circumstances, to submit an appeal to the Student Casework Office in the Academic Registry within five working days of results being published, in accordance with the Procedures for the submission of Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards (see Section 10.4, in Appendix 1).

It shall be the responsibility of students to ensure that the work they submit to the script panel, for in-class discussion or for assessment is entirely their own. Any allegation of cheating or other impropriety that might give an advantage in assessment to students against whom allegations have been made shall be considered under the Regulations governing allegations of Academic Misconduct on the part of a student. Any student found to be guilty of academic misconduct shall be subject to the provisions of those Regulations.

**Procedure in the event of a fail**

Should a student fail a unit or a component assessment of a unit, s/he will be entitled to one reassessment in that unit, at a time to be determined by the Assessment Board. The Assessment Board may also demand that the student retake this unit (with attendance). Students will not be allowed to submit work for assessment until the previous unit has been passed.

If a student fails their first assessment for a unit they will be allowed one chance to resubmit with a new deadline agreed with the course leader.

**Reassessment**

A student shall normally be entitled to be reassessed on one occasion in any Unit for which a failing mark has been awarded. Reassessment in a Unit shall mean reassessment in the item(s) that have been failed and shall involve the completion of new tasks.

Reassessment shall normally be based on the same principles and requirements as the first opportunity for assessment and shall assess achievement of the same learning outcomes. A student shall not have the right to be reassessed in elements that are no longer current in the course.
When a student has failed both the original assessment and the reassessment for a Unit, the student shall not be able to continue on the course and will graduate with any previously achieved award.

**Mitigating circumstances/extenuation**

If a student believes that their failure, absence or non-submission of work in an item of assessed work was due to illness or other valid reasons, the student may submit a claim under procedures approved by the Academic Board. If this claim is found to be substantiated, recommendation shall be made to the Assessment Board that the student be assessed on the next occasion in the item of assessed work; this attempt shall replace the opportunity when the mitigating circumstances pertained. Coursework may be submitted up to two weeks later than the original submission date if a claim for extenuation is substantiated.

Claims for extenuation in respect of poor performance shall not be valid.

**Procedure in the Event of Illness or Other Valid Cause**

If a student fails a unit or a component assessment of a unit due to certificated illness or any other cause deemed sufficient under the School's standard procedure for Extenuating Circumstances the Assessment Board may determine a result for the unit if it is satisfied that it has sufficient evidence from that assessment which is complete to arrive at a fair estimation of the student’s performance on the unit.

In the absence of such evidence, the Board may permit the student to complete the failed assessment as if for the first time by a date to be determined by the Board, or deem the unit not to have been taken.

If a candidate would have been eligible for an award (including an award with distinction) but for the circumstances already covered, the Board may recommend that award if it is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of the student’s achievement in the unit so affected.

**13. Further information**

**Final Critical Review**

In the last week of each term, the whole student film output from the MA Filmmaking is screened in succession. Members of staff and outside practitioners comment on the work in all its aspects - including scripting.

This is an event of great importance to the life of the School and an excellent opportunity for screenwriters to deepen their understanding of the filmmaking context of their work. Independent outside comment has considerable significance for the students’ own practice; it creates the possibility of an insight from points of view beyond any individual teacher and beyond the School. It represents a constant re-examining of the appropriateness of practice for everyone concerned. All the students learn from each other’s experience here.

**Evening Screenings**

There is a full programme of evening screenings in the School's two cinemas. Practitioners from the film industry come in to show and discuss their work with the students; this keeps the students alert to new technical and aesthetic developments. Screenings are also aimed at
developing a lively and critical sense of film culture. There is an active film society whose main purpose is to represent the students’ film interest, but which also cooperates with teaching programmes to supplement daytime showings.

14. **Glossary of key words**

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<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Regulations</td>
<td>London Metropolitan University Academic Regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>APL</td>
<td>Accreditation of Prior Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Module</td>
<td>A compulsory module</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Handbook</td>
<td>This handbook, containing an introduction to your course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designate</td>
<td>A module that may be chosen from a list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEO</td>
<td>Higher Education Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>A Degree student is studying at Certificate, Intermediate or Honours level</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>Personal Development Portfolio – a record of your developments and achievements. Guidance is given in your HEO module</td>
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<tr>
<td>SENDA</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Disability Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Handbook</td>
<td>A University booklet containing the Academic Regulations and Codes of Conduct</td>
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Academic Regulations Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards 215

10.4 Procedures for Appeal (against decisions of Assessment Boards/Termination of Student Status)

Introduction

1. These Procedures are intended to:

Protect students in University examinations and/or course assessments, including APL assessment, against the possibility of unfair assessment resulting from omission or error on the part of the appropriate University authorities, or;

From unforeseen circumstances affecting a student, and/or;

Provide a process whereby a student can appeal against a decision to terminate their student status (e.g. discontinuation of studies).

2. No student appealing under these Procedures, whether successfully or otherwise, shall be treated less favourably than would have been the case had an appeal not been made.

3. If a student wishes to present a complaint about the University, its courses or services or the individuals concerned in their delivery, the Student Complaints Procedure should be used.

In cases where delay has occurred as a result of confusion over which is the correct procedure to follow, the date of the first enquiry shall be considered to be the date on which the appeal was lodged.

4. Research degree students should use the appeals process outlined in the Research Degree Regulations. Students who wish to appeal against an Academic Misconduct decision should refer to the appeals section of those procedures. Students enrolled on a course of the University delivered via a collaborative arrangement by another institution shall be subject to these Procedures unless otherwise specified.

5 The Academic Registrar has overall responsibility for the Procedures for Appeal.

Appeal Procedures

6. These procedures are to be used to:

6.1. Appeal against a decision of an assessment board (refer to PART 1 and PART 2 of these procedures); or,

6.2. Appeal against the University’s decision to terminate a student’s status or enrolment (refer to PART 1 and PART 3 of these procedures).

If when appealing against termination of student status the appellant also believes they may have grounds for appeal against a decision of an assessment board, these details should be included in the appeal against termination of student status, as in 6.2 above.

PART 1: Validity and Invalidity for all appeals
7. An appeal in respect of an academic judgment arrived at through due process shall be deemed invalid.

8. For an appeal to be valid it must:

8.1 Be made in writing on the appropriate Appeal Form;

8.2 Include all relevant, independent, supporting evidence, as appropriate;

8.3 Be dated and bear the full name, student number and signature of the student;

8.4 Be received within five working days of the date of publication of the result(s) of the assessment(s) concerned or the date of notification of the termination of status, as appropriate. (Appeals received after this deadline will be deemed invalid unless the appellant has demonstrated good reason for any period of delay);

8.5 Be submitted in person at an Undergraduate or Postgraduate Office. If submitted by post, must be addressed and sent directly to the Student Casework Office. (The University does not accept responsibility for the receipt or late delivery of appeals submitted by post.)

9 For appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards the appeal must also list the title, code and affected component(s) of the module(s) concerned and specify the assessment period and academic year in respect of which the appeal is being made.

10 The Student Casework Office shall check each appeal against the criteria listed in 7 - 9 above. Any appeal that does not meet these criteria shall be deemed invalid.

PART 2: APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF ASSESSMENT BOARDS

Grounds of appeal against decisions of Assessment Boards

11 An appeal against a decision of an Assessment Board can only be made on the following grounds:

11.1 That the University did not act in accordance with the relevant Regulations and/or Procedures in the provision and execution of the assessment process and that this, in turn, had a significant impact on the student;

Such appeals must be made on a Procedural Defect Appeal Form and must:

- identify the Regulations and/or Procedures concerned;
- explain the way in which the University’s actions differed significantly from those set out under those Regulations and/or Procedures,
- include independent third party evidence which corroborates the claim

11.2 That the student had been affected by mitigating circumstances which prevented him or her from submitting an item of assessed work by the due deadline or attending an examination, to which the student was unable, for good reason, to draw proper attention via the University’s Mitigating Circumstances Procedures*.

Such appeals must be made on a Mitigating Circumstances Appeal Form and must:

- explain why the student was unable to submit a claim of Mitigating Circumstances via the
- University’s standard procedure for such claims;
- explain the circumstances which occurred and show how these prevented the student from submitting the item(s) of assessed work by the due deadline or from attending the examination(s) in question;
- include independent third party evidence which corroborates both of the above claims.

* Appeals made on grounds of mitigating circumstances will be assessed against the criteria set down in the Procedures for submission of Mitigating Circumstances.

11.3 That the student's academic performance** in an examination or in an item of coursework submitted by the due deadline, had been significantly impaired by mitigating circumstances which occurred immediately prior to the assessment date.

Such appeals must be made on an Academic Performance Appeal Form and must explain the circumstances which occurred and how these would have significantly impaired the student’s academic performance in the item of assessment and include independent third party evidence which corroborates the claim.

** Before submitting an appeal in respect of impaired academic performance, it should be noted that, if successful: (i) the student shall surrender any mark achieved for the item of assessment concerned (see 13.2, below) and (ii) a student may have a mitigating circumstances/academic performance claim accepted on two occasions only for a particular item of assessed work. A mark of zero will be awarded for that item of assessed work with no further entitlement to be reassessed, if it is not then attempted at the next available opportunity.

Consideration of appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards

12 The Student Casework Office shall review each application and determine its validity. Where an application is invalid the appeal shall not be considered.

13 The Student Casework Office shall consider each valid application and determine whether the ground(s) listed in 11 above has/have been clearly demonstrated. In such cases the appeal shall be upheld and the Assessment Board shall be advised of the action to be taken.

13.1 For successful appeals made on grounds of procedural defect or mitigating circumstances the outcomes will normally be as follows:

- Late coursework accepted as if submitted by its due date; or,
- A further assessment or reassessment opportunity granted in place of the affected attempt.

13.2 For successful appeals made in respect of impaired academic performance the outcome shall be as follows:

The assessment/reassessment concerned will be voided and any mark achieved must be surrendered. The student will then be granted a further assessment/reassessment, at the next available opportunity, in place of the voided attempt.

14 In cases where an appeal has not clearly demonstrated that the ground(s) of appeal have been met; the appeal shall be rejected. The student shall be informed of this decision and granted a further ten working days in which to submit relevant additional evidence to clearly demonstrate the ground(s) on which the appeal has been made.
15 The Student Casework Office shall consider any further relevant additional evidence submitted for the deadline set down in 14 above, and determine whether the grounds have been clearly demonstrated. In cases where the additional evidence clearly demonstrates that the grounds have been met, the appeal shall be upheld and the Assessment Board shall be advised of the action to be taken, as in 13 above.

16 In cases where the additional evidence does not clearly demonstrate that the grounds of appeal have been met, the appeal shall be rejected and the student shall be informed of this decision. The student shall also be informed that the University’s internal procedures for appeal have been exhausted.

**Common reasons why appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards are Unsuccessful**

17 The following list is not exhaustive but details the most common reasons why appeals are rejected or deemed to be invalid.

17.1 The appeal was received outside the deadline of five working days from the publication of the result(s) concerned without good reason and evidence for the delay (In cases where a delay is unavoidable, the appeal must be submitted as soon as possible after the deadline and must include an explanation and independent supporting evidence covering the entire period affected.)

17.2 The student claims that a computational error occurred in arriving at a final mark but did not query this by submitting a Module Query Form (MQF) to the appropriate Undergraduate or Postgraduate Office for the specified deadline, and the appeal does not include good reason and evidence for their failure to do so.

17.3 The student claims that a computational error occurred in arriving at a final mark, despite having already queried this via a Module Query Form and having received a clear response from Registry within 20 working days.

17.4 The appeal is made on grounds of mitigating circumstances but does not meet the criteria set down in the Procedures for the submission of Mitigating Circumstances. (Students who wish to appeal on grounds of mitigating circumstances are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with these criteria).

17.5 The appeal does not relate to decision of an Assessment Board.

17.6 The student's claim of mitigating circumstances could, in the opinion of the University, have been disclosed via the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.

17.7 Although frequently cited in appeal applications, the following situations do not constitute valid grounds for appeal:

The student disagrees with the academic judgement of an Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an item of academic work or the classification of a final award, where the Board’s decision was reached in accordance with the regulations. *In such circumstances the student should request feedback from the relevant tutor /module tutor.*

The student was ignorant of the published assessment regulations and procedures, including deadlines for the submission of assessments, claims of Mitigating Circumstances and Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards.
The student’s academic performance was affected by poor teaching, supervision or guidance. *(In such circumstances the student should submit a complaint in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure).*

**PART 3: APPEALS AGAINST TERMINATION OF STUDENT STATUS**

**Grounds of appeal against termination of status as a student**

18 Where a student’s status has been terminated in accordance with the Academic regulations (Section 9.1 19, 42 – 48) they have the right to submit an appeal to the Student Casework Office on the grounds that:

The University did not act in accordance with the relevant Regulations and/or Procedures in terminating the student’s status and/or;

The student had been affected by mitigating circumstances which had a significant long-term impact, but which, for good reason, they had previously been unable to disclose via the appropriate University procedures.

19 All valid representations against termination of student status will be considered on the basis of the appellant’s written statement and supporting evidence, except where the Vice-Chancellor determines that, in an individual case, it would not be in the interests of fairness to do so. In such a case the appellant may be invited to present their case orally.

- Such appeals must be made on a Termination of Student Status Appeal Form and must:
  - identify the Regulations and/or Procedures concerned;
  - explain the way in which the University’s actions differed significantly from those set out under those Regulations and/or Procedure and/or;
  - explain the circumstances which occurred and show how these significantly affected the student for a substantial period of time and why the student was previously unable to disclose these circumstances via the Procedures for claims of Mitigating Circumstances or appeal;
  - include independent third party evidence which corroborates the claim

20 Appeals against termination of student status shall be considered by the Vice-Chancellor, or nominee, as appropriate.

21 Having fully considered an appeal against termination of student status the Vice-Chancellor may:

21.1 revoke the termination of the student’s status; or,
21.2 request further information and/or evidence;
21.3 set conditions that the student must meet before the termination is revoked; or;
21.4 confirm the decision to terminate the student’s status as a student.

22 The Vice-Chancellor’s decision shall be final. The Student Casework Office shall inform the student of the Vice-Chancellor’s decision.

**Concluding remarks**

23 Under the Higher Education Act 2004 the University subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of her/his
appeal s/he may be able to apply for a review of their appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint s/he takes to the OIA is eligible under its Rules. The University will confirm in writing to students, by way of a completion of Procedures email/letter, when they have exhausted the University's internal procedures. At this point students may apply to the OIA if they wish.

24 Should compelling new evidence come to light, the Vice-Chancellor shall on behalf of the University, have the authority to re-open any appeal where it would be in the interests of fairness to do so. This authority shall normally only be exercised within six months of the conclusion of the relevant proceedings.

**Note**

25 Fraudulent claims will lead the University to take action under its disciplinary procedures.